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ABSTRACT

An effective vita must satisfy two requirements: (1) respond to the requisite function of search and selection committees--the choosing of one professional from many applicants; and (2) address the candidate's desire to command him-or-herself. The model vita advocated here meets both requirements with a three to four page outline followed by attachments containing comprehensive data. (Author/KE)

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M O D E L V I T A

A Recommended Format for an Academic Resume Directed to Higher Education Search Committees

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HE 007 719

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Decisions by committees seeking faculty members and academic administrators are influenced by professional qualifications, not the format of a candidate's vita. Myths about the importance of the way curriculum vitae are constructed have been perpetuated by resume writing companies and the mystique of the higher education search process. Heavy competition for the best positions, fostered by demographic, economic, and equal employment opportunity trends, has encouraged the myths. Suffice to note: a resume's design can never compensate for weak credentials.

An effective vita must satisfy two requirements. Primarily, a vita should respond to the requisite function of search and selection committees: the choosing of one professional from many applicants. With dozens or hundreds of vitae to contend with, committee members appreciate those that best provide concise, unambiguous information to facilitate the sorting of candidates. Committees take note of those vitae which meet this requirement and the thoughtfulness implied thereby. Secondarily, a vita should address the candidate's desire to commend him-or-herself. If a vita is orderly, concise, intelligent, well-written, and informative, without being bloated, something important will have been said.

Related to this second point, a vita should project the humanness of the candidate. It should not be a dry recitation of facts. A vita need not be dull. Although there is evidence that past achievement--not personal factors, test scores, or graduate school--is the best indicator of future performance, almost all committees pay close attention to human or personal qualities. What a person is likely to do in the future weighs at least as heavily on the minds of committee members as what he or she has done in the past and personal qualities frequently are the bases for such judgments. The assumption is made that consideration of past activity and personal qualities is a guide to future productivity. A vita can project both the candidate's humanness and his or her achievement record by including short paragraphs and incomplete sentences about the candidate. Examples of this are included in the model.

In the initial sorting process, committees need concise, quick-reference information to get an overall "feel" for a candidate, while also needing more comprehensive information to screen finalists. The model vita advocated here

meets both requirements with a 3-4 page outline followed by attachments containing comprehensive data. Vitae of massive length, sans a preliminary outline, tend to bore and to raise suspicions that they may be padded or that no one could have done all the things listed very well. After a certain point, long, linear vitae tend to be counterproductive in their impact. Extremely short vitae should be avoided too, unless, of course, there is nothing much to tell.

Vitae, if properly done, should speak for themselves. Lengthy cover letters are not necessary. At worst, long letters spelling out a candidate's philosophy of life and other items best saved for interviews can oversell and hence redound negatively; at best, they add to the committee's paper glut. Simple, tightly-edited paragraphs transmitting the vita and pointing out a few salient features particularly applicable to the position in question are all that is necessary. A one page letter is sufficient.

Letters of reference present special problems. Overburdening referees--referees should be asked whether they wish to serve as such--is something to avoid. Where search committees request references, variations on the following sentences in the cover letter should be adequate: "On page X of my vita, /number/ references are listed. Although it is entirely at your option, I would prefer that they not be contacted unless I am included among your prime candidates." Or, "As a courtesy to my references, I prefer that they not be contacted until the committee reaches the finalist stage in its selection process." Or, "References are not listed in my vita, although I shall provide immediately any number you require upon notification that I am a finalist candidate." Not less than five nor more than eight primary references should be listed. A diversity of reference sources--faculty members and administrators, local, regional, and national contacts--is best. Since graduate school placement services project a "junior" or "beginning professional" connotation, their use should be avoided by all except recent degree recipients.

Precise vitae formats are matters of opinion. Certainly there are many viable possibilities. Nonetheless, the best formats, directed to search committees for faculty and administrators, have several things in common:

- orientation toward the candidate's achievements, human and personal qualities, and professional abilities.
- utilization of dignified format (gimmicks should be avoided; though this may appear conservative, it fits the Academy's perception of itself).

- orientation toward academic audiences, not business or other sectors (for example, statements of objectives and major selling points, while appropriate for business resumes, may, in an academic setting, obtain negative responses).
- utilization of 20 or 50 pound weight stock paper (subtle grey or beige, off-white, or white paper is recommended).
- utilization of regular size paper (8½ x 11 inches) (odd sizes may project slickness).
- utilization of standard electric typewriters (for even better results, an IMB Selectric Composer is recommended).
- inclusion of adequate spacing for easy reading (include sufficient "white" space).
- utilization of multilith reproduction methods rather than a photoduplicating machine.
- attention to sound writing style--an obvious point so often overlooked (many cover letters are ineptly written and their accompanying vitae contain, for example, presumptuous abbreviations, misspellings, and incorrect punctuation).
- orientation toward central features of a career, not marginal items (including questionable items projects either a lack of discretion or an inability to establish goals and priorities, or both).

The model vita here is in skeletal form, filled in only where necessary for illustration. The opening summary is 4 pages long--a maximum length--although the attachments may be of any reasonable length, reasonable being defined as the length required to provide meaningful, comprehensive, truthful information. The headings included are, of course, optional. Inclusion of any heading or category of information should be determined by a candidate's record, the requirements of a committee searching for candidates to fill a particular level of position, and the particular class of institutions (e.g., research universities, comprehensive state colleges and universities, liberal arts institutions, professional schools, and community or junior colleges) to which the candidate aspires.

After a first draft of a vita has been completed, it should be put to obvious tests of quality and form. Proper balance and appropriate focus are important. Candidates should ask themselves: What impression does my vita give? Which questions does my vita answer? Are the impressions given the questions answered in line with the requirements of the search committee and my career goals? For example, letters and resumes submitted to search committees for

DR. JAMES Q. DOE

office (mailing address)	American Committee on Higher Education One Dupont Circle Washington, D.C. 20036 Telephone: (202) 833-4764
home	1776 Freetown Drive Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 13402 Telephone: (917) 442-9081
personal	Born: July 4, 1936 (Mount Swanzey, New Hampshire); Citizenship: U.S.; Married: Amity G. (M.A., child development, Jurassic University); Children: Serge X. (3 years old) and Marion Y. (5 years old); Religious affiliation: Zeladu; Health: excellent; Physical impairments: none; Security clearances: "Top Secret" (Defense Department, 1962); Social Security number: 000-00-0000. /last 5 items optional/
professional experience	AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION (ACHE) Washington, D.C.

- Director, Program for the Advancement of Teaching (PAT)

The PAT is designed to strengthen college and university teaching in the United States by identifying, selecting....

/include a 10 line paragraph describing the program, institution or entity of current employment/

1974 - present

Major responsibilities include publicizing the opportunities available in PAT, conducting national....

/include a 10 line paragraph describing major functions/

/where appropriate, descriptive material on present activity may be appended as Attachment A; the availability of any attachment should be noted in the last sentence of the paragraph under heading/

academic administrators must project a different quality than those submitted for faculty posts. For administrative positions, personal qualities (vigor, loyalty, patience, sense of perspective, intelligence, etc.), knowledge and understanding of the functioning of an academic institution, scholarship, personality and temperament for administration, leadership ability, and potential for performance in positions at the level in question must be projected. For faculty posts, scholarship, teaching, professional activities and competence, and institutional and public service are the overwhelming questions. In either case, just to recapitulate, the demands made by the search committee and the necessity to project personal qualities and achievement record constitute the ultimate tests.

The format of the recommended vita here eventuates from the decade long experience of the American Council on Education's Academic Administration Internship Program with screening candidates for fellowships in academic administration and with dealing with hundreds of search committees. Resumes from several thousand candidates, all of them academics, and others serving as program participants, provided models from which the recommendations were culled.

To reiterate, the recommended format is only a guide. It should be adapted to individual needs. Flexibility should characterize utilization of this model.

UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH Fairplay, AK

1968 - 1974 - Professor of Arctic Studies (tenured, 1969)
Major responsibilities include....

/include a 5 line descriptive paragraph/

1966 - 1968 - Associate Professor of Arctic Studies

SOUTH CENTRAL COLLEGE Wheatland, OK

- Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics and Assistant Dean of the College
Major responsibilities include....

/include a 3 line descriptive paragraph/

summer, 1962 UNIVERSITY OF THE WORLD Schuyler, WY

- Visiting Lecturer in Geography

/after the first three most recent positions, list only as immediately above without further description/

/include major summer and military experience under professional experience; if experience record is lengthy, divide it into such categories as academic experience and other professional experience or teaching and administration/

education GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCTIC STUDIES, SALT MOUNTAIN UNIVERSITY UT

summer, 1969 - Postdoctoral Certificate in....

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, URANUS UNIVERSITY
New York, NY

1965 - 1968 - Ph.D., 1968. Concentration in Indian languages, English, Spanish....

Dissertation: "Creation of Semantic Dialogues...." (Dissertation Abstracts Number A69428, University Microfilms)

1964 - 1965 - M.A., 1965. Concentration in areas listed above. Thesis: "Origins of the Indian...."

1963 - 1964 — OST EUROPA UNIVERSITÄT, ALTEGESCHICHTE INSTITUT, Berlin, DDR

- Certificate in the ancient history of Eastern Europe.

1959 - 1963 — UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS, Jupiter, OH

- B.A., summa cum laude, 1963. Concentration in....
Honors Thesis: "The Variable Constant."

fellowships, scholarships, and educational support

American Foreign Institute Fellowship, 1972-1974.
Alcoholic Research Bureau Grant, 1968-1969.
Artic Union Scholarship (for graduate tuition), 1965-1967.

research and program support

/list grants and other financial support received/

etc.

honors and listings

Listed in Outstanding People of the World, 1975.
Distinguished Service Award, City of Goff, PA, 1972.
Honorary Doctorate of....
Alpha Alpha Alpha (artic sciences honorary), 1965.
President of the Glacier Chapter, 1970.
B.A. awarded with highest honors, 1963.

etc.

professional memberships

/list associations and offices held with dates of active memberships/

etc.

representative professional activities

/list major intra and extramural activities over previous 5 years, lead by such descriptors as Lecturer, Chairperson, Convener, Participant, Initiator, Consultant, Speaker, Organizer, Reviewer; political listings should be avoided unless it is to advantage; if the list is long, it should be categorized under descriptive headings such as education, children and youth, health, government management, the arts, etc. This section is particularly important for "humanizing" the candidate; after reading it, the search committee should have a clear notion of the range of the candidate's interests and activities./

For complete record, see Attachment B.

representative civic activities

/include trusteeships; list by city and dates/

etc.

publications and papers	See Attachment C.
academic concentrations and research interests	/list by major field or academic discipline and sub-field/ etc. For list of courses taught, see Attachment D.
early background and family	/include brief summary of personal background through college; information about family, education, employment, and service activities may be listed/
languages	/include indication of fluency in speaking and reading/
travel	U.S.A. - 47 states; 60,000 - 75,000 miles work-related travel per year in recent years; 17 other nations: Canada, Japan, Cape Verde Islands, Sri Lanka, Gambia....
avocations and special skills	Cycling, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, politics, classical music, computer programming (BASIC), statistical analysis..
social clubs	College Club (Washington,D.C.), Naples Club (Rome)
primary references (list of twenty secondary references available)	Dr. Charles R. Davis President University of the World 76 West Main Street Schuyler, Wyoming 86601 (842) 963-2680 Dr. Judith Q. Dolsky Professor of Religion University of the North P.O. Box 47 Fairplay, Alaska 96699 (574) 874-3899 etc. /references may be categorized under such headings as personal and professional or teaching and administration/

Attachment A — /if appropriate, include a concise "fact sheet" style description of institution or primary activity/

description of current activity

Attachment B

professional activities

SERVICE TO SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY:

- International
  a.
  b.
- National
  a.
  b.
  c. /include dates/
- Local
  a.
  b.

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH:

- The University
  a.
  b.
- The College of Arctic Studies
  a.
- The Department of Arctic Agriculture
  a.
  b.
- Graduate School
  a.

CONSULTANCIES:

- Fairplay Board of Education, Committee on Indian Education, 1969.

etc.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING:

- /include special initiatives, pedagogical plans, efforts to improve teaching campus-wide, curricular materials.../

etc.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION:

- /include special initiatives, innovative designs.../

etc.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO....

Attachment C

publications and other public activity

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS:

(1) James Q. Doe..../list in numbered chronological order/

ARTICLES:

(1) James Q. Doe..../list in numbered chronological order/

REVIEWS:

- Invited
  a.
  b.
- Volunteered
  a.
  b.

COMPOSITIONS:

EXHIBITIONS:

PERFORMANCES:

MAJOR PAPERS DELIVERED:

- Invited
  a.
  b.
- Volunteered
  a.
  b.

POPULAR: /include radio and television appearances/

WORK IN PROGRESS OR FORTHCOMING: /list as to whether it is an article, book, monograph, etc., and give tentative title/

MAJOR UNPUBLISHED REPORTS AND FUNDED PROPOSALS:

Attachment D

courses taught and theses supervised

COURSES TAUGHT:

- /categorize by discipline, dates, and level/

THESES SUPERVISED:

- /categorize by name, title, degree, and date/

Attachment E

supporting material

/include teaching evaluation summaries, citations, activity descriptions, or other items which will tend to give a search committee a better "feel" for the candidate; include items previously listed in the summary vita; this attachment may be appended in a suitable envelope./